

NSC BRIEFING

20 February 1957

THE SITUATION IN JORDAN

State Department review completed

- I. King Hussain and left-wing nationalist factions trying to strengthen their positions. Both sides apparently want to avoid a showdown for the time being.
 - A. King excuses his delay on ground he wants the Nabulsi cabinet, symbol of the left-wing's power, to bear the burden of negotiating for termination of treaty with Britain.

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- II. Period following formal termination of Anglo-Jordanian Treaty will probably open new phase on contest between king and pro-Egyptian cabinet.
 - A. On 13 February Britain and Jordan announced treaty will be terminated by 1 March, if possible, but no later than 1 April.
 1. All 1,400 British ground troops will leave Jordan within six months after termination--that is, no later than 1 October.
 - B. Hussain has told Ambassador Mallory he intended to make changes in the cabinet when the treaty talks were finished.

- D. Financial settlement for British military equipment and installations to be relinquished remains to be made. British put value at more than \$36 million. Jordan disputes Britain's valuation; has little cash in any event.
- E. British desire to divest themselves as painlessly as possible from a liability in Jordan. Willing to take a big financial loss in turning equipment over to Jordan, but hopes to keep its troops in country until it has removed equipment it hopes to keep.

III. Political maneuvering continues.

- A. Latest anti-leftist move by Hussain was to order withdrawal of draft of Syrian-Jordanian "economic unity agreement" from consideration by legislature.
1. Leftists seeking this agreement as first step in federation with Syria.
- B. On 18 February Nabulsi declared that his government would take steps to bring about a confederation of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan after end of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty.
1. Proposal will be discussed at the meeting of the Arab chiefs of state with King Saud in Cairo next week.

C. Nabulsi's National Socialist Party bloc has prevented sessions of legislature by preventing quorum from convening. They seek to avoid sessions until after return of Hussain from Cairo meeting.

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- IV. Egypt apparently recognizes it may have trouble in Jordan. To remove a source of friction between Egypt and Jordan, Egypt beginning to repatriate about 1,200 Egyptian fedayeen Palestine Home Guard and Egyptian National Guard personnel who escaped from the Gaza strip across Israel to Jordan after hostilities in November.
- A. The fedayeen have been unruly, a source of embarrassment to Egypt and an annoyance to Jordan's security forces. Redeployment will also substantially restore Egypt's capability for conducting large-scale terrorist operations against Israel.
- V. About 2,500 Saudi Arabian troops and 3,000 Syrians remain in Jordan. All Iraqi troops have been withdrawn. The Jordan Arab army, consisting of the old Arab Legion and the polyglot National Guard, numbers about 43,600, and is short of heavy arms, Air Force has 15 Vampires.

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